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Economic and environmental questions: cartography

Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on the work of its twenty-eighth session

(New York, 28 April-2 May 2014)

Summary

The twenty-eighth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was held at United Nations Headquarters from 28 April to 2 May 2014, in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 2013/257.

The present report describes the activities of the session and presents the major findings of the Group of Experts, focusing primarily on the importance of its work in supporting United Nations Conferences on the Standardization of Geographical Names and the essential assistance it continues to afford Member States in the geographical information field and related cartographic areas.

* E/2014/1/Rev.1, annex II.



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I. Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decisions for adoption by the Council

1. The United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Draft decision I

Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its twenty-eighth session, and the dates, venue and provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session¹

The Economic and Social Council:

- (a) Takes note of the report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its twenty-eighth session (E/2014/78);
- (b) Decides that the twenty-ninth session of the Group of Experts shall be held in Bangkok from 25 to 29 April 2016;
- (c) Requests the Secretary-General to render to the Group of Experts at its twenty-ninth session the necessary assistance, including necessary logistical support, interpretation into all six official languages and other essential resources required to guarantee its success;
- (d) Approves the provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session as set out below:

Provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

1. Adoption of the agenda and of the provisional programme of work.
2. Report of the Chair.
3. Report of the secretariat of the Group of Experts.
4. Reports of the divisions.
5. Report of the liaison officers and international organizations.
6. Activities relating to the Task Team for Africa.
7. Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation.
8. Activities relating to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy.
9. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.
10. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology.
11. Activities relating to the Working Group on Romanization Systems.

¹ See para. 60 for the programme budget implications.

12. Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names.
13. Activities relating to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding.
14. Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms.
15. Activities relating to the Working Group on Pronunciation.
16. Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage.
17. Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use.
18. Other toponymic issues.
19. Preparation for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
20. Review of the statute of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
21. Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the thirtieth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
22. Adoption of the report.

Draft decision II

Amendment to the rules of procedure of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

The Economic and Social Council decides to approve the amendment to the rules of procedure of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names proposed by the Group of Experts,² whereby rule 37 is replaced with the following text:

"XII. Public meetings

Rule 37

The meetings of the Group of Experts and meetings of its working groups shall be in public, unless it decides otherwise."

B. Decisions brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following decisions adopted by the Group of Experts are brought to the attention of the Council:

28/101

Report of the Chair

The Group of Experts took note of the report of the Chair.

28/102

Report of the Secretariat of the Group of Experts

The Group of Experts took note of the report of the secretariat.

² See para. 61 below.

28/103**Reports of the divisions**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted by 17 of the 24 geographical/linguistic divisions of the Group of Experts and expressed appreciation for the excellent summary of the reports;

(b) Emphasized that the divisional reports reflected considerable progress in the field of geographical names standardization; that some divisions reported impressive achievements, while others reported challenges; and that political and economic problems still hampered success in some divisions;

(c) Encouraged experts to learn from the experiences presented in the 17 divisional reports;

(d) Noted that divisional reports varied considerably in their structure, length and content: some divisions reported on a variety of divisional activities such as meetings, websites and other joint projects, while others concentrated on country-based information;

(e) Acknowledged that the variation in reports reflected the fact that the divisions face a variety of challenges and resources constraints;

(f) Considered the development and use of a template for divisional reports for future sessions and acknowledged that the use of such a template should be voluntary.

28/104**Reports of the liaison officers and international organizations**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the four written reports and one oral report originating from four liaison officers and international organizations;

(b) Noted that reports had not been received from all liaison officers;

(c) Recognized that it is important to maintain the relationship between the Group of Experts and these partners;

(d) Agreed that cooperation and joint participation in future events, such as the International Map Year, would be strongly encouraged.

28/105**Report of the Task Team for Africa**

The Group of Experts:

(a) Welcomed the report from the coordinator of the Task Team for Africa;

(b) Recognized that the complex situation in Africa requires a concerted effort to help achieve the objectives of the Group of Experts;

(c) Urged the Task Team for Africa to maintain its efforts to raise awareness of the importance of geographical names, and encouraged African

nations to continue their programme of work, as described in the Task Team's report.

28/106

Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Welcomed the efforts of the Working Group to improve the implementation of resolutions on national standardization of geographical names programmes and increase the effectiveness of the activities of the Group of Experts towards these ends;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the Working Group's important programme of work, including its preparation and analysis of session and conference evaluation surveys, its compiling and archiving of working papers and the creation and maintenance of the database of resolutions of the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names;
- (d) Also expressed appreciation for the Working Group's involvement in encouraging experts to refer to resolutions through the use of documentation guidelines;
- (e) Noted the progress made by individual countries with respect to legislation, geographical names committees and academic societies, as well as the challenges to implementing institutional frameworks;
- (f) Recognized the proposal to create an Africa North Division and urged the parties involved to consult one another prior to its potential establishment at the twenty-ninth session.

28/107

Activities relating to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Thanked the Working Group for its valuable work over the past years;
- (c) Stressed that the main activity of the Working Group is to ensure that there will be qualified staff to engage in toponymic activities in the future;
- (d) Expressed its appreciation for the support received from the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat for past training courses, and requested the Statistics Division to support future training activities;
- (e) Also expressed its appreciation for the cooperation with the Cartography Working Group of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, which acts as a partner in the organization of toponymy courses in Latin America;

(f) Noted that the nature of the toponymical tasks of topographers and cartographers has evolved from names collection and processing to the maintenance of databases and web services and that maintaining data currency will increasingly require the cooperation of the general public through crowd-sourcing techniques, and in that context, encouraged additional outreach activities regarding geographical names.

28/108

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports and oral statement presented under this agenda item;

(b) Thanked the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers for the high level of interest in its area of responsibility, as evidenced by the large number of reports;

(c) Noted that the majority of the reports addressed national activities and that two dealt with multinational efforts, all of which showed the importance of the development of mechanisms to store, visualize and disseminate geographical names information;

(d) Identified a trend of activities focusing on the establishment of multifunctional or multiple use geographical names databases, services and applications that provide geographical names data for a variety of purposes;

(e) Noted that several reports reflected an encouraging trend of making toponymic data freely available via the Internet;

(f) Recognized the use of geographic information systems and Web GIS in the linking to feature data;

(g) Acknowledged the increasing efforts permitting the integration of geographical names data into spatial data infrastructures and the increasing importance of the utilization of volunteered geographic information and crowd-sourced data;

(h) Noted that these very positive trends were fully in line with resolution VIII/6 of the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, which recommended better integration of geographical names into national and regional spatial data infrastructures, and that the importance of establishing and providing reliable and standardized geographical names had been recognized by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management as an essential part of geospatial information management;

(i) Observed that 16 United Nations resolutions deal with either gazetteers or automated data processing/digital data;

(j) Urged the Working Group to continue its important work, particularly in re-examining its web discussion forums;

(k) Recommended that the Working Group collect and publish examples, best practices and commonly shared issues, as provided by the countries/divisions, on the website of the Group of Experts;

(l) Agreed that these issues will be forwarded to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding and will be considered in conjunction with the secretariat of the Group of Experts.

28/109

Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Thanked the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology for its activities;
- (c) Urged the Working Group to continue its important work, particularly in advancing the digital and online presence of the Group of Experts through its work on the terminology database currently under development;
- (d) Encouraged the Working Group to initiate a revision of the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names, starting with a meeting in 2015;
- (e) Expressed support for the transition of the Glossary of Terms for the Standardization of Geographical Names from paper to digital form.

28/110

Activities relating to the Working Group on Romanization Systems

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports presented under this agenda item;
- (b) Acknowledged with satisfaction the growing number of countries with non-Roman-script languages having the United Nations-approved systems of romanization for geographical names;
- (c) Expressed appreciation for the steps taken by those countries to implement the approved systems both in the donor countries and on an international level;
- (d) Stressed the importance of the reversibility, if possible, of any proposed system;
- (e) Urged the countries with non-Roman-script languages not yet having United Nations-approved systems to devise, implement and submit their national systems of romanization for approval at the next United Nations conference on the standardization of geographical names;
- (f) Requested the countries where the United Nations-approved systems have either changed or are no longer implemented, to submit the new systems for consideration and subsequent approval;

(g) Noted that information on the Working Group's activities as well as the systems of romanization were available on the Working Group's website, which is periodically updated;

(h) Supported continuing the liaison between the Working Group and international bodies dealing with similar topics, such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and Working Group 3 of ISO Technical Committee 46;

(i) Urged the working group to continue its efforts in contacting national authorities in matters related to romanization and monitoring the situation with romanization worldwide.

28/111

Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names

The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted the report of the Working Group and the unofficial "working version" list of country names;

(b) Commended the Working Group members, the United Nations terminology team and other experts for their contribution in reviewing and correcting the new version of the Group of Experts list of country names;

(c) Thanked the Working Group for its ongoing work in maintaining and improving the list of country names.

28/112

Activities relating to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

The Group of Experts:

(a) Noted the reports presented under this agenda item;

(b) Thanked the Working Group on Publicity and Funding for the recent and upcoming activities;

(c) Encouraged the Working Group to continue its excellent work, particularly in advancing the digital presence of the Group of Experts through an updated media kit, the Group of Experts website and Wikipedia presence, and its efforts to identify financial support for training participation and attendance at sessions of the Group of Experts;

(d) Supported the establishment of an International Geographical Names Day in 2017 to highlight the importance and relevance of the Group of Experts and the standardization of geographical names;

(e) Agreed that this working group would be responsible for moving this recommendation forward.

28/113

Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports submitted under this agenda item, and commended the very thorough efforts made in defining the endonym/exonym divide and in developing new definitions;
- (b) Noted the difficulties encountered in agreeing on new definitions owing to tension between theoretical and practice-oriented approaches;
- (c) Agreed to let the Working Group have a last attempt at agreeing on new definitions at its meeting in Hermagor, Austria in June 2014;
- (d) Supported the Working Group's future focus on the definition of criteria for the use of exonyms;
- (e) Welcomed the documenting of the endonym/exonym divide in four volumes, which would allow for the discussion to be taken up again in the future;
- (f) Applauded the continued publication of well-elaborated exonym gazetteers, noting that new gazetteers had been presented at the current session.

28/114

Activities relating to the Working Group on Pronunciation

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the report that provided a case study highlighting the importance of understanding the effects of pronunciation variations;
- (b) Thanked the Working Group for its continued activities;
- (c) Recognized that the scope of work of the Working Group on Pronunciation could affect the work of the Working Groups on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage and Romanization Systems and might require participation and contributions from those Working Groups;
- (d) Welcomed the new Convenor of the Working Group, Tjeerd Tichelaar.

28/115

Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

The Group of Experts:

- (a) Took note of the reports and oral statement submitted under this agenda item;
- (b) Thanked the Working Group for its ongoing efforts;
- (c) Noted the benefits of making culturally and historically significant data available;

(d) Encouraged the further discussion of the conflict between official and private naming and the challenge to standardization;

(e) Offered to provide, as requested, best practices and experiences in handling sensitive naming situations, such as street naming;

(f) Welcomed the new Co-Convenors, Annette Torensjö and Leif Nilsson, to be assisted by a steering group of six experts;

28/116

Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors for international use

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted under this agenda item and welcomed the recent updates to the inventory of toponymic guidelines;

(b) Thanked the former Coordinator, who unfortunately needed to resign, for his efforts in leading this important programme;

(c) Recommended that Member States that had not yet done so prepare toponymic guidelines in accordance with resolution IV/4;

(d) Recommended that Member States regularly update existing toponymic guidelines in order to keep them current;

(e) Welcomed the new Coordinator, Gerhard Rampl.

28/117

Other toponymic issues

The Group of Experts:

(a) Took note of the reports submitted under this agenda item;

(b) Urged national standardization authorities to continue their critical work and to share their experiences in future sessions, especially regarding data quality;

(c) Noted the apparent challenge posed by decreasing support for and declining status of onomastics and related research;

(d) Encouraged the preparation of a resolution for the next Conference to emphasize the importance of place names research.

II. Items considered by the Group of Experts

A. Report of the Chair

3. The Group of Experts considered item 2 of its agenda at its 1st and 8th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. It had before it the report of the Chair contained in document GEGN/28/10, which was presented by the Chair.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

4. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/101).

B. Report of the secretariat of the Group of Experts

5. The Group of Experts considered item 3 of its agenda at its 1st and 8th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. It had before it the report of the secretariat of the Group of Experts contained in document GEGN/28/11. At its 1st meeting, the Group of Experts heard an introductory statement by a representative of the secretariat. An expert from the United States/Canada Division made a statement.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

6. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/102).

C. Reports of the divisions

7. The Group of Experts considered item 4 of its agenda at its 1st and 8th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. At its 1st meeting, it had before it, for presentation, working paper W.P.77/4, and for information, working papers W.P.3/4, W.P.9/4, W.P.18/4, W.P.24/4, W.P.32/4, W.P.36/4, W.P.37/4, W.P.58/4, W.P.59/4, W.P.62/4, W.P.63/4, W.P.65/4, W.P.66/4, W.P.69/4, W.P.70/4, W.P.74/4 and W.P.75/4.

8. Also at the 1st meeting, the Group of Experts heard an overview statement from the expert from the Norden Division. The Chair and the experts from the United States/Canada Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division and the Arabic Division made comments or raised questions; and the expert from the Norden Division summarized the discussion on the item.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

9. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/103).

D. Report of the liaison officers and international organizations

10. The Group of Experts considered item 5 of its agenda at its 2nd and 8th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. At its 2nd meeting, it had before it working papers W.P.6/5, W.P.34/5, W.P.72/5 and W.P.76/5. For information under this item, the Group of Experts had before document GEGN/28/7.

11. At the 2nd meeting, on 28 April, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the liaison officers of the International Hydrographic Organization, the International Council of Onomastic Sciences, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers and the International Cartographic Association.

12. At the same meeting, the Chair and experts from the Norden Division, the Arabic Division, the Dutch-and German-speaking Division, the United States/Canada Division and the Africa South Division made statements or raised questions, and the Chair summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

13. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/104).

E. Report of the Task Team for Africa

14. The Group of Experts considered item 6 of its agenda at its 2nd and 8th meetings, on 28 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. At its 2nd meeting, the Group of Experts had before it working paper W.P.29/6. At the same meeting, the Group of experts heard a presentation by the Coordinator of the Task Team for Africa. The Chair, the Coordinator and the experts from the Africa Central Division, the Arabic Division and the Africa East Division made comments or raised questions, and the Chair summarized the discussion on the item.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

15. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/105).

F. Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

16. The Group of Experts considered item 7 of its agenda at its 2nd, 3rd and 8th meetings, on 28 and 29 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. At its 2nd meeting, the Group of Experts had before it, for presentation, working papers W.P.27/7, W.P.31/7, W.P.41/7, W.P.42/7, W.P.46/7, W.P.47/7, W.P.50/7, W.P.52/7, W.P.55/7 and W.P.71/7, and for information, documents GEGN/28/8 and GEGN/28/9.

17. Also at the 2nd meeting, on 28 April, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the Convenor of the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation. Presentations were also made by the experts from the United States/Canada Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Arabic Division, the Norden Division and the Africa West Division. The Chair, the Convenor and the experts from the Baltic Division, the United States/Canada Division, the Norden Division, the Africa South Division, the Arabic Division and the Africa Central Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded.

18. At the 3rd meeting, on 29 April, the Group of Experts heard presentations by experts from the Arabic Division, the Norden Division and the Asia East Division (other than China). The Chair, the Convenor and experts from the Arabic Division, the Norden Division, the China Division and the United States/Canada Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion on the item.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

19. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/106).

G. Activities relating to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

20. The Group of Experts considered item 8 of its agenda at its 3rd, 4th and 8th meetings, on 29 April and 2 May 2014. At its 3rd meeting, it had before it working papers W.P.33/8, W.P.40/8, W.P.53/8 and W.P.67/8.

21. At the same meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by the Convenor of the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy. The Convenor and experts from the Africa East Division, the Africa Central Division, the Africa South Division, the Arabic Division, the Norden Division, the United States/Canada Division and the East Central and South-East Europe Division made comments and raised questions, to which the Convenor responded.

22. At its 4th meeting, heard presentations by experts from the Arabic Division, the Asia East Division (other than China) and the United States/Canada Division. The Chair, the Convenor and experts from those divisions made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

23. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/107).

H. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

24. The Group of Experts considered item 9 of its agenda at its 4th, 5th and 8th meetings, on 29 and 30 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. For its consideration of the item, it had before it, for presentation, working papers W.P.1/9, W.P.5/9, W.P.7/9, W.P.12/9, W.P.15/9, W.P.16/9, W.P.19/9, W.P.20/9, W.P.21/9, W.P.22/9, W.P.45/9, W.P.48/9, W.P.49/9, W.P.54/9, W.P.56/9 and W.P.73/9, and for information, working papers W.P.2/9 and W.P.79/9.

25. At the 4th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the Convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers and by experts from the Asia East Division (other than China), the Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic), the Arabic Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division and the Norden Division. The Chair, the Convenor and experts from the Arabic Division, the Asia South-East Division, the Africa South Division, the United States/Canada Division, the Norden Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division and the French-speaking Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded.

26. At the 5th meeting, heard presentations by experts from the Asia East Division (other than China), the United States/Canada Division, the East Central and South-East Europe Division and the Latin American Division. The Convenor and experts from the Arabic Division, the Africa South Division, the Norden Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division, the Baltic Division and the Dutch- and German-speaking Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion on the item.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

27. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/108).

I. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology

28. The Group of Experts considered item 10 of its agenda at its 5th and 8th meetings, on 30 April and 2 May 2014, respectively. For its consideration of this item, the Group of Experts had before it for presentation working papers W.P.38/10 and W.P.44/10.

29. At the 5th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the Convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology and an expert from the East Central and South-East Europe Division. The Convenor and experts from the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the Arabic Division and the Norden Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

30. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/109).

J. Activities relating to the Working Group on Romanization Systems

31. The Group of Experts considered item 11 of its agenda at its 5th, 6th and 8th meetings, on 30 April and 2 May 2014. For its consideration of this item, it had before it for presentation working papers W.P.8/11 and W.P.4/11.

32. At its 5th meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by an expert from the Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic) and the Convenor made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded.

33. At its 6th meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by the Convenor of the Working Group. The Convenor and experts from the China Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

34. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/110).

K. Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names

35. The Group of Experts considered item 12 of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working paper W.P.61/12, and for information, working paper W.P.60/12.

36. At its 6th meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by an expert from the United States/Canada Division, on which the experts from the East Central

and South-East Europe Division and the Romano-Hellenic Division made comments.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

37. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/111).

L. Activities relating to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding

38. The Group of Experts considered item 13 of its agenda at its 6th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working paper W.P.25/13 and a related document, W.P.35/13.

39. At the same meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the Convener of the Working Group on Publicity and Funding and an expert from the French-speaking Division. The Convenor, the Chair and experts from the Africa East Division, the Arabic Division, the Asia East Division, the Africa South Division, the Norden Division, the China Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division and the United States/Canada Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

40. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/112).

M. Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms

41. The Group of Experts considered item 14 of its agenda at its 6th, 7th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working paper W.P.13/14 and the related documents W.P.11/14, W.P.26/14 and W.P.64/14.

42. At the 6th meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by the Convenor of the Working Group on Exonyms. The Convenor and experts from the Norden Division and the Arabic Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded.

43. At the 7th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by the representatives of the Norden Division and the East Central and South-East Europe Division. The Convenor made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Convenor then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

44. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/113).

N. Activities relating to the Working Group on Pronunciation

45. The Group of Experts considered item 15 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working paper W.P.10/15.

46. At its 7th meeting, the Group of Experts heard a presentation by an expert from the China Division. The Chair and experts from the Baltic Division, the Africa South Division, the Arabic Division and the Norden Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded. The Chair then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

47. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/114).

O. Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names and Cultural Heritage

48. The Group of Experts considered item 16 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation under this item, working papers W.P.17/16 and W.P.68/16, and for information, working paper W.P.57/16.

49. At its 7th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by experts from the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the Norden Division and the Asia South-East Division. The expert from the United States/Canada Division made a statement. The Chair and experts from the Romano-Hellenic Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Baltic Division, the United States/Canada Division, the China Division, the Africa South Division, the Asia South-East Division and the Dutch- and German-speaking Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Chair then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

50. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs, as orally amended (see sect. I.B, decision 28/115).

P. Toponymic guidelines for map editors and other editors for international use

51. The Group of Experts considered item 17 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working papers W.P.14/17, W.P.23/17, W.P.28/17 and W.P.78/17.

52. At its 7th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by experts from the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the Norden Division and the Africa East Division. At the same meeting, the Chair and experts from the United States/Canada Division and the Dutch- and German-speaking Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. An expert from the Dutch- and German-speaking Division was announced as the next Convenor of the Working Group on Toponymic Guidelines. The Chair then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

53. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/116).

Q. Other toponymic issues

54. The Group of Experts considered item 18 of its agenda at its 7th and 8th meetings. It had before it, for presentation, working papers W.P.39/18, W.P.43/18 and W.P.51/18.

55. At its 7th meeting, the Group of Experts heard presentations by experts from the Portuguese-speaking Division, the Norden Division and the Asia East Division (other than China). The Chair, experts from the United Kingdom Division, the Asia South-East Division, the Norden Division, the Asia East Division (other than China) and the Arabic Division, as well as representatives of the Google Corporation, made comments and raised questions, to which the presenters responded. The Chair then summarized the discussion.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

56. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted a draft decision submitted by the Rapporteurs (see sect. I.B, decision 28/117).

R. Preparation for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names

57. The Group of Experts considered item 19 of its agenda at its 8th meeting. It had before it, for information, the provisional agenda for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, contained in document GEGN/28/3, which had been adopted at the Tenth Conference. The Chair brought the document to the attention of the Group of Experts.

S. Special presentations

58. During the session, the Group of Experts heard the following special presentations:

(a) "The power of location: trends in geographic information systems", delivered at the 3rd meeting by the representative of the Environmental Systems Research Institute. The Chair and experts from the Arabic Division, the Africa South Division, the Norden Division and the Africa Central Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(b) "Renewing the system for collecting and storing place names in Norway", delivered at the 4th meeting by an expert from the Norden Division. The Chair and experts from the Africa East Division, the Africa South Division, the Norden Division, the Arabic Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division and the United States/Canada Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(c) "Geospatial information for United Nations operations", delivered at the 5th meeting by a representative of the Cartographic Section of the Department of Field Support of the Secretariat. The Chair and experts from the Arabic Division, the Africa South Division, the Africa Central Division, the French-speaking Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division, the Norden Division and the United Kingdom Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(d) "The relevance and place of geographical names within the United Nations Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management", delivered at the 6th meeting by a representative of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Chair and experts from the United Nations/Canada Division, Dutch- and German-speaking Division, Norden Division, Arabic Division, Africa Central Division and the East Central and South-east Europe Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(e) "Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Information", delivered at the 7th meeting by a representative of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Chair and experts from the Arabic Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Asia South-East Division, the Africa South Division and the International Cartographic Association made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded;

(f) "Terminology at the United Nations", delivered at the 8th meeting by a representative of the Terminology and Reference Section of the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. The Chair and experts from the Dutch- and German-speaking Division, the China Division, the United States/Canada Division and the Arabic Division made comments and raised questions, to which the presenter responded.

III. Provisional agenda, venue and dates of the twenty-ninth session

59. The Group of Experts considered item 20 of its agenda at its 8th meeting. It had before it draft decisions entitled "Report of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names on its twenty-eighth session and the dates, venue and provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session" (GEGN/28/L.1) and "Amendment to the rules of procedure of the Group of Experts on Geographical Names" (GEGN/28/L.2).

60. At the same meeting, an expert from the Romano-Hellenic Division made a comment and raised a question and the Acting Director of the Statistics Division of the Department for Economic and Social Affairs made a statement. The Secretary read an oral statement, on behalf of the Secretary-General, regarding the programme budget implications of draft decision GEGN/28/L.1.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

61. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May 2014, the Group of Experts adopted draft decisions GEGN/28/L.1 and GEGN/28/L.2 (see sect. I.A).

IV. Adoption of the report

62. The Group of Experts considered item 21 of its agenda at its 8th meeting. It had before it the draft report on its twenty-eighth session (GEGN/28/L.3), together with an informal paper containing draft conclusions, recommendations and decisions of the session, both of which were introduced by the Rapporteurs.

63. At the same meeting, the Chair, the Rapporteurs and experts from the United States/Canada Division, the Asia East Division (other than China), the Asia South-East Division, the East Central and South-East Europe Division, the Baltic Division, the United Kingdom Division, the Romano-Hellenic Division, the Dutch- and German-speaking Division and the Africa East Division made statements, in the course of which amendments to the draft report and informal paper were introduced.

Action taken by the Group of Experts

64. At its 8th meeting, on 2 May, the Group of Experts adopted the draft report on its twenty-eighth session, as orally amended, together with the draft conclusions, recommendations and decisions contained in the informal paper, and entrusted the Rapporteurs to finalize the report by reflecting the proceedings of the meeting.

V. Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

65. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2013/257, the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names held its twenty-eighth session at United Nations Headquarters from 28 April to 2 May 2014. The Group of Experts held eight meetings, which were chaired by the Vice-Chairs, Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands) and Naima Friha (Tunisia), in the absence of the Chair, Bill Watt (Australia).

B. Attendance

66. The session was attended by 174 participants representing the geographic/linguistic divisions of the Group of Experts (see the annex the present report). The list of participants is contained in document GEGN/28/4.

C. Officers of the session

67. The Officers of the session were as follows:

Chair:

Bill Watt (Australia)

Vice-Chairs:

Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands)

Naima Friha (Tunisia)

Rapporteurs:

Peder Gammeltoft (Denmark)
Trent Palmer (United States of America)

For the names of the Chairs of the divisions, see <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/divisions.html>. The Officers of the working groups were:

Task Team for Africa

Convener:

Brahim Atoui

Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy

Convener:

Ferjan Ormeling

Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers

Convener:

Pier-Giorgio Zaccheddu

Working Group on Toponymic Terminology

Convener:

Staffan Nyström

Working Group on Romanization Systems

Convener:

Peeter Päll

Working Group on Country Names

Convener:

Leo Dillon

Working Group on Publicity and Funding

Convener:

Peder Gammeltoft

Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation

Convener:

Sungjae Choo

Working Group on Exonyms

Convener:

Peter Jordan

Working Group on Pronunciation

Convener:

Gerhard Rampl³

³ Elected at the 7th meeting, on 1 May 2014.

Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage

Conveners:

Annette Torenstj 
Leif Nilsson

D. Opening statements

68. On behalf of the Chair, Bill Watt (Australia), the Vice-Chair, Ferjan Ormeling (Netherlands), opened the twenty-eight session of the Group of Experts at the 1st meeting, on 28 April 2014.

69. In his opening remarks, the Chair summarized the main tasks ahead, including making the best use of current technologies to enhance the work of the Group of Experts.

70. Stefan Schweinfest, Acting Director of the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, made an opening statement summarizing the recent accomplishments and highlights of the work of the Group of Experts.

E. Adoption of the agenda

71. Also at the 1st meeting, the Group of Experts adopted its provisional agenda (GEGN/28/1) as orally amended, as follows:

1. Adoption of the agenda and of the provisional programme of work.
2. Report of the Chair.
3. Report of the secretariat of the Group of Experts.
4. Reports of the divisions.
5. Reports of the liaison officers and international organizations.
6. Activities relating to the Task Team for Africa.
7. Implementation of resolutions and activities relating to the Working Group on Evaluation and Implementation.
8. Activities relating to the Working Group on Training Courses in Toponymy.
9. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Data Files and Gazetteers.
10. Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic Terminology.
11. Activities relating to the Working Group on Romanization Systems.
12. Activities relating to the Working Group on Country Names.
13. Activities relating to the Working Group on Publicity and Funding.
14. Activities relating to the Working Group on Exonyms.
15. Activities relating to the Working Group on Pronunciation.

16. Activities relating to the Working Group on Geographical Names as Cultural Heritage.
 17. Toponymic guidelines for map and other editors for international use.
 18. Other toponymic issues.
 19. Preparation for the Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names.
 20. Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the twenty-ninth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names.
 21. Adoption of the report.
72. Also at the 1st meeting, the Group of Experts adopted its organization of work (GEGN/28/12).

F. Documentation

73. The documents before the Group of Experts at its twenty-eighth session are available at the website of the Statistics Division at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/ungegnSession28.html> and at the PaperSmart Portal at <http://papersmart.unmeetings.org/en/ecosoc/ungegn/twenty-eighth-session/agenda/>.

Annex

List of participating divisions

Africa Central Division
Africa East Division
Africa South Division
Africa West Division
Arabic Division
Asia East Division (other than China)
Asia South-East Division
Asia South-West Division (other than Arabic)
Baltic Division
Celtic Division
China Division
Dutch- and German-speaking Division
East Central and South-East Europe Division
Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division
East Mediterranean Division (other than Arabic)
French-speaking Division
Latin America Division
Norden Division
Pacific South-West Division
Portuguese-speaking Division
Romano-Hellenic Division
United Kingdom Division
United States of America/Canada Division
